

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9546

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3259

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: JUMBLATT EATS CROW

REF: BEIRUT 3257

1. JUMBLATT'S DECISION NOT TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH ME LASTED ABOUT THREE HOURS. AFTER RECEIVING ABOU-DIAB'S MESSAGE LATE IN THE MORNING ABOUT THE NEED FOR INDIRECT CONTACT ONLY (REFTEL), MY LUNCH WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BUSINESS, BANKING AND INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY WAS INTERRUPTED BY ANOTHER URGENT CALL FROM ABOU-DIAB. CALL CONSISTED OF AN URGENT PLEA THAT I SEE JUMBLATT IMMEDIATELY.

2. CONSIDERING THAT JUMBLATT HAD OBVOUUSLY BEEN FORCED TO EAT A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF CROW IN A VERY BRIEF PERIOD, I AGREE TO SEE HIM WITHOUT ANY ATTEMPT TO PLAY HARD TO GET.

3. I MET A DIFFERENT JUMBLATT--A JUMBLATT WHO WAS TELLING ME HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. THE SYRIANS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT THEY HAD INCREASED THEIR TROOPS IN LEBANON TO PROTECT THE CAUSE OF THE LEFT AND TO PREVENT AN AMERICAN INTERVENTION. FOR THIS WORTHWHILE CAUSE THEY HAD ALREADY SENT IN THREE BRIGADES TO THE BEKAA AND IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO SEND THESE BRIGADES WESTWARD BEYOND CHTAURA. JUMBLATT STRESSED THAT HE DID NOT WANT THIS KIND OF SUPPORT FROM THE SYRIANS. HE HAD ALREADY INFORMED THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR
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OF THIS, GORCE BEING IN SYRIA. (THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR

CONFIRMED THIS.) HE CONSIDERED THAT THE ROLE OF THE SYRIANS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY BETWEEN THE LEBANESE RIGHT AND LEFT. HOWEVER, HE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE A SYRIAN ROLE ONCE THE NEW PRESIDENT WAS ELECTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SYRIANS SHOULD RESTRICT THEIR ACTIVITY MEANWHILE.

3. JUMBLATT WARNED (BUT NOT TOO CONVINCINGLY) THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE COUNTER-MEASURES. BESIDES THE FRENCH, HE HAD ALSO CONTACTED THE EGYPTIANS AND THE IRAQIS. ARAFAT TOO WAS CONCERNED. HE NOTED THAT MALEK SALEM, KARAME'S BROTHER-IN-LAW WAS MAKING A SECOND TRIP TO DAMASCUS, AS WAS THE SHITITE LEADER MOUSA SADR. WHILE JUMBLATT DENIED HE WAS BEHIND EITHER INITIATIVE, HE CLEARLY INDICATED THAT HE FAVORED BOTH. JUMBLATT ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT THE SYRIANS WERE AFTER. PERHAPS THEIR POSITION ON UNDOF WAS INVOLVED. IN ANY EVENT, THE SYRIANS ACTION WAS BEGINNING TO DRAW THE LEBANESE PARTIES SOMEWHAT TOGETHER. ALL IN ALL A MEANS HAD TO BE FOUND TO SETTLE THINGS.

4. I TOLD JUMBLATT THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH HIM. ONCE MORE I ENCOURAGED DIALOGUE AMONG THE LEBANESE FACTIONS AND STRESSED THE NEED FOR A PEACEFUL RATHER THAN A MILITARY SOLUTION. I NOTED THAT I WOULD BE GOING TO JOUNIE TOMORROW TO SPEAK WITH THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS.

5. JUMBLATT SEEMED TO WELCOME MY VISIT AND TO BE GRATEFUL FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CLOSE CONTACT. ABANDONING PRETENSE TO THE WIND HE DID NOT EVEN ATTEMPT TO KEEP MY MEETING WITH HIM SECRET, DESPITE HIS CLAIM THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH FOREIGN "MEDIATORS". AS I LEFT HIS RESIDENCE, WE WERE FLOODED BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND THEIR PHOTOGRAPHERS.

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